

REMARKS

Claims 1-7, 9-27 and 29-34 are all the claims pending in the application. Claims 15-23 have been withdrawn and claims 5 and 28 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Drawing Objections

The Examiner objects to the drawings as not showing the features of claims 5 and 28. Claims 5 and 28 have been canceled, rendering the objection moot.

Specification Objections

The Examiner objects to the title as not being descriptive. The title has been amended in a manner believed to overcome the objection.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-4, 6-14, 24-27 and 29-34 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Di Giulio et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,242,314). Applicants respectfully traverse.

Claim 1 recites, among other things, that at least one of a plurality of connectors is a relay connector, that the relay connector is installed between two other of the connectors of the plurality of connectors and that the relay connector comprises a plurality of connection terminals.

The Examiner asserts that Di Giulio discloses a connector 10 in which the wire 18a is cut by the cutting wedge 110, and the contacts 70 are connected to both sides of the cut portion (refer to FIG. 9). Each of the contacts 70 is connected to the circuit board module 14. The Examiner asserts that Di Giulio connector 10 constitutes the claimed relay connector. However, in claim 1, there is at least one connector installed on either side of the relay connector. For example, the non-limiting embodiment shown in Fig. 1 of the present application discloses

connectors 3a to 3d provided at both sides of the relay connector 6 as shown in FIG. 1. That is, connectors 3a to 3d, which are switchably connectable to another circuit, are provided separately from the relay connector 6. Because of this configuration, the circuit can be easily modified by changing connections at the connectors 3a to 3d and the manufacturing cost can be decreased. For example, design modification of a circuit can be achieved, without changing connection of a connector at one side of the relay connector by changing connection of a connector at the other side of the relay connector.

In contrast to the claimed invention, in Di Giulio the alleged connectors 70 are not installed on either side of the alleged relay connector 10. Instead, the connectors 70 are part of the relay connector 10. Since the Di Giulio connectors 70 are part of the relay connector 10, they are not installed on either side of the relay 10 as claimed.

Furthermore, in the connector of Di Giulio, the ends of the wire 18a which has been cut are respectively connected to the circuit board 14 via the contacts 70. Two contacts 70 are connected to the single circuit board 14. Di Giulio does not disclose whether each contact 70 constitute separate circuits. Therefore, Di Giulio also differs from the claimed invention because it lacks the different circuits recited in claim 1.

Moreover, in the connector disclosed in Di Giulio, because two contacts 70 are connected to the single circuit board 14, the entire circuit board 14 must be replaced when design modification of a circuit is to be achieved, thereby increasing costs.

In view of the above, Applicants submit that claim 1 is allowable over Di Giulio. Also, claim 24 is allowable at least for reasons similar to claim 1 and claims 2-4, 6-14, 25-27 and 29-34 are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency from one of claims 1 and 24.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103


Claims 5 and 28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Di Giulio et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,242,314). Claims 5 and 28 have been canceled, rendering their rejection moot.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



Stephen R. Valancius
Registration No. 57,574

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

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